

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
310 CMR 7.74: Reducing CO₂ Emissions from Electricity Generating Facilities
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Version 1.1 (September 2018)

The purpose of this document is to clarify and explain certain provisions of 310 CMR 7.74. Before reading this document, please review the regulation and other available background information, available on MassDEP’s web site via <https://www.mass.gov/guides/electricity-generator-emissions-limits-310-cmr-774>. If you have questions about 310 CMR 7.74, please email william.space@state.ma.us or climate.strategies@state.ma.us.

This version is an update from version 1.0, which was published in February 2018. New or revised material is marked with an asterisk.

Contents

Q1 - Which emissions are subject to a compliance obligation under 310 CMR 7.74?	1
Q2 – How will facilities know which emissions can qualify under the “emergency deferred compliance” provisions?	2
*Q3 – Please explain whether there are any limits on “banking” allowances.	2
Q4 – Is there a risk that outside parties, such as banks or environmental organizations, will buy up allowances and retire them (e.g., as “offsets”)?	2
Q5 – How will facilities comply with the requirements of 310 CMR 7.74 and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)?	2
*Q6 – How can I revise the Certificate of Representation (COR) for my facility?	3

Q1 - Which emissions are subject to a compliance obligation under 310 CMR 7.74?

A1 – The only emissions that are subject to a compliance obligation under 310 CMR 7.74 are CO₂ emissions reported pursuant to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) emissions reporting requirement, 310 CMR 7.70(8). MassDEP is aware that facilities may be required to report additional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions pursuant to other regulations including the Massachusetts GHG reporting regulation, 310 CMR 7.71, and the US EPA GHG reporting regulation, 40 CFR Part 98; however, these additional emissions are not subject to a compliance obligation under 310 CMR 7.74.

Q2 – How will facilities know which emissions can qualify under the “emergency deferred compliance” provisions?

*A2 – 310 CMR 7.74(6)(d) allows an electricity generating facility that emits CO₂ during an emergency to defer, for one year, compliance for a portion or the entirety of the CO₂ emissions emitted during the emergency. (Note that August, 2018 amendments removed regulatory language limiting the use of emergency deferred compliance to the last 45 days of each calendar year, including for 2018.) Any deferred emissions must be offset in the following year on a two for one basis.

The term “emergency” is defined in the regulation. For 2018, emissions will be considered to have occurred during an emergency if they occur when ISO-NE has triggered “Master Local Control Center Procedure No. 2” that affects facilities in Massachusetts. Additional information about this procedure is available on ISO-NE’s web site. Should it be necessary to provide additional or updated information about emergency deferred compliance for a particular year, MassDEP will do so by revising this document and notifying facilities.

***Q3 – Please explain whether there are any limits on “banking” allowances.**

*A3 – Revised banking provisions were finalized in August, 2018. The revisions removed restrictions on banking. Facilities may retain unused allowances and use them for compliance in future years, without limitation. In order to ensure that emissions decline each year, MassDEP will adjust the number of allowances auctioned each year downward to ensure that the number of allowances available for use in a year cannot exceed the aggregate emissions limit for the prior year.

Q4 – Is there a risk that outside parties, such as banks or environmental organizations, will buy up allowances and retire them (e.g., as “offsets”)?

A4 – No, the regulation does not allow or provide any method for allowances to be retired by any outside parties.

Q5 – How will facilities comply with the requirements of 310 CMR 7.74 and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)?

A5 – 310 CMR 7.74 and RGGI are two separate and distinct programs. For facilities, the requirements of the two programs are similar– for each ton of CO₂ emissions, the facility must hold an allowance.

Therefore, to comply with both regulations, the facility will need to hold two different types of carbon dioxide allowances (a RGGI allowance and a 7.74 allowance). This will ensure compliance with in-state and regional emissions limits.

***Q6 – How can I revise the Certificate of Representation (COR) for my facility?**

*A6 – To revise the COR for a facility, the Designated Representative (DR) must upload a revised COR form to the Massachusetts Carbon Allowance Registry (Registry), and then immediately make the corresponding changes in the Registry.

- The revised COR does not need to be notarized or mailed to MassDEP.
- Please contact MassDEP for instructions on changing who the DR is for a facility in the Registry. All other changes may be made by the DR in the Registry.
- The DR must ensure that any authorized user who is authorized to transfer allowances from a facility's allowance account is listed on the facility's COR form in the Registry. These authorized users must also be given "View-Only" access to the facility in the Registry so that their names appear in the public facilities report.